

Keep Kent Working!
It's jobs for Kent

Skills course for underprivileged

A COURSE aimed at helping disadvantaged teenagers achieve future business success is being held this week.

The five-day Youth Leadership Summit starts on Monday, October 3, at Grosvenor Hall in Ashford, and is run by the Knowledge to Action Foundation.

Throughout the week the teenagers will be mentored by various industry experts focusing on a range of personal development techniques across the areas of health, relationships, wealth, leadership and learning.

A number of team-building exercises will also be utilised, such as climbing and zip-lining.

"The Knowledge to Action Foundation has raised significant sums of money for charities such as Barnardo's and the Ubuntu Education Fund but we want to be a hands-on initiative as well," said founder Greg Secker.

"We are in the fantastic position of being able to enhance the lives of children, giving them opportunities and learning tools they wouldn't otherwise have access to until later in life."

Career boost for AXA apprentices

TUNBRIDGE Wells-based health insurance company AXA PPP Healthcare has recruited nine apprentices as part of a programme developed with K College.

The new recruits were chosen from 166 applicants and will be employed within the firm's customer service team for 11 months while also working towards several relevant qualifications including Key Skills and City & Guilds certificates.

They will then be able to consider moving onto other roles in the company, such as in marketing, IT, finance, sales, and HR.

Membership and people director Sonia Wolsey Cooper said: "At AXA PPP Healthcare, providing the best support to our members through excellent customer service is at the heart of our business."

"Our customer service apprenticeship programme provides a fantastic chance for talented individuals who have an appetite for success to acquire the experience that can ultimately open doors to a world of opportunity."

Master craftsmen reap fruits of labour

By Steve Knight

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THE quality of Kent apprenticeships was clear for all to see when two dedicated tradesmen picked up awards at Britain's biggest skills competition.

Michael Chalmers, 21, who trains at K College and works for Folkestone-based JCL Decorating and Building Services, took home a gold medal in the painting and decorating category at the annual SkillBuild event, while 37-year-old Folkestone resident Rupert Davis won a silver in stonemasonry.

The competition saw both trainees battle it out with other competitors at an intense three-day final which took place at Leeds College of Building.

Scoring top marks in his category, Michael was also awarded the title of Apprentice Decorator of the Year and presented with a trophy and cheque for £1,000 as a result.

"I couldn't believe it, it was brilliant," he said. "I knew I'd done well but I thought some of the other competitors had done better than me so I was absolutely amazed to be called up to the stage to collect my prize."

"I'm really grateful to everyone who's supported me, especially my tutor Bruce Kerney at K College. I would never have entered this competition if it wasn't for him, so I hope he's really proud of what I've achieved."

"It's a great competition and I've really enjoyed it. I just want to keep learning more and developing new skills to be the best I can be, and hopefully go far in the industry."

SkillBuild – which is managed by the sector skills council and industry training board CITB-ConstructionSkills – saw more than 100 talented tradesmen and women compete for

the top spot in their respective lines of work.

The competitors made it through to the UK final after achieving the highest scores at 15 regional heats held across the UK between March and May.

They were marked on the essential skills needed to work in the sector, including following detailed instructions, producing accurate work outputs, being economical with materials, and working to strict timescales.

Both Michael and Rupert now stand a chance of representing the UK at the next WorldSkills competition due to take place in Leipzig, Germany, in 2013. A number of winners from previous SkillBuild competitions will be taking part in the WorldSkills event due to be held this week in London.

CITB deputy chair Judy Lowe said: "We are extremely proud of all the trainees who competed at the UK final. The high level of talent and skill we have seen is testament to the solid foundations laid by organisations such as ourselves, industry employers and training providers, and we are grateful for the continued support of the competition."

"SkillBuild demonstrates the huge talent and ability of those young people working within the industry, showcasing the professionalism of the sector as a whole and helping to encourage new blood into the industry."



TALENTED: Rupert Davis, 37, won a silver award in stonemasonry at the contest

What is your business doing to help Keep Kent Working? Do you send employees on training courses to aid their personal development or run apprenticeship schemes? If you have a good news story email steve.knight@archant.co.uk or give him a call on 01303 817136.

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